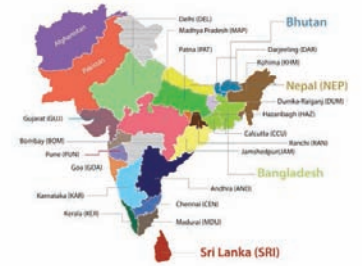




# SAAJN



Issue-8 | January 2021

SOUTH ASIAN ASSISTANCY (CONFERENCE) JESUIT NEWS

## News Events & More...



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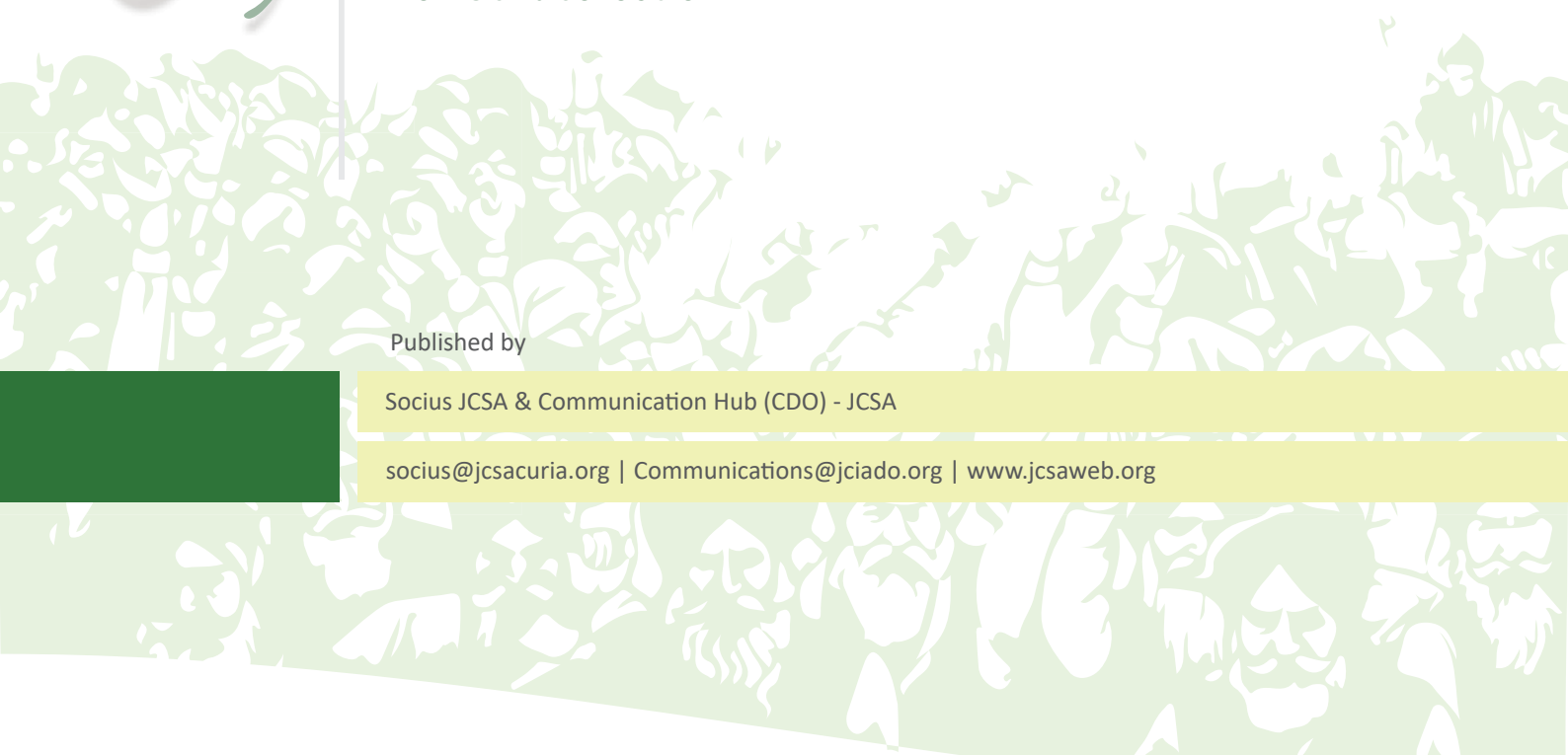
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SAAJN



# From the Editor's Desk



By the end of December 2020, JCSA bid farewell to Fr Keith Abranches, SJ, who was the Socius to the POSA, the Secretary of Formation and the Editor of SAAJN. He has taken up his new office as the Rector of Gesu, Rome. The Jesuit Conference of South Asia will miss him. We dedicate this issue of SAAJN to Fr Keith Abranches. We also present to you the plight of Indian farmers protesting against the recently enacted farm laws in India, Jesuit interventions in alleviating the sufferings of the migrants in India, the continuing efforts at standing with Fr Stan Lourduwamy who was unjustly arrested on false charges, the Conference preparations for the Ignatian year 2021-22 and other news of the Conference.

Fr. Shajumon Chakkalakkal, SJ  
*Socius, Jesuit Conference of India/South Asia*



TONY DIAS SJ, SJES



## Jesuit intervention in farmers protest at Delhi borders

Fr Stany, the POSA constituted a committee on 31 December 2020 for planning and monitoring Jesuit intervention in farmers' protests at Delhi borders with Fr Tony Dias as the Coordinator and Fr Denzil Fernandes, Fr Arun Mozhi, Fr PR John and Fr Sunny Jacob as members.

What is considered 'the largest protest in history', played out on the streets leading to the political Capital of India, has resulted in an unusual churning. Indian democracy is again at the cross-roads and being severely tested. Political parties are forced to take a clear stand. The 'sentinel on the qui vive' and protector of the Indian Constitution - the Supreme Court of India - is on trial. And it is as if all of us - the so-called civil society members, religious and the Church - are being interrogated and challenged. This is clearly a moment of reckoning, a conscience call for each one of us.

Farmers, and those dependent on farmlands, all

over India are asking for the repeal of the three controversial farm laws rammed through Parliament without due process and with scant respect for democratic principles and norms. The farming community knows that these laws are detrimental to their interests, and to their existence. At the time of writing this piece the farmers are out there on the roads braving the icy winds, the shenanigans of the government and the greed of the corporate world. More than 70 persons have died and there have also been instances of suicide. A suicide note left by a priest said "injustice is indeed a sin; and to suffer injustice passively is also a sin".

The Church, including the Jesuits and their collaborators, has been trying to respond to the crises. A Farm Committee (FarmCom) has been constituted by the President of the Jesuit Conference. This team has visited the border areas where the farmers, including women farmers, landless labourers and children, eke out a



precarious existence. Although there is enough supplies of essentials and food, the uncertainty and the stress of living on the streets is taking a toll. These people long for support and solidarity, and compassion. It is heartening to note that several civil society members and Church organizations have organized relief and solidarity visits.

On the 15th of January, the FarmCom members (Denzil Fernandes, Arun Mozhi, PR John, Sunny Jacob and Tony Dias) organized a unique programme at the ISI Delhi. Three farmers from the

borders, along with a female law student from a Jesuit institution in Bangalore spoke to a group of civil society members, the staff and the Jesuits. They analyzed the laws, expressed their anguish at being labeled 'anti-nationals', khalistanis, naxals and so on. They spoke about their determination to fight for Justice and Dignity right till the end. A panel of speakers consisting of Fr P R John (Principal of Vidya Jyoti Theological College, Delhi), Fr Adv Arun Mozhi and Mr Parvez from ISI shared their views on the subject.

On Republic Day (26th January) FarmCom members and several other Jesuits and their collaborators, including nuns went to the border areas and other strategic sites to welcome the farmers' arriving in Delhi for their 'Tractor Rally'. Unfortunately, allegedly miscreants engaged in violent behaviour that marred the solemnity and significance of the rally. The FarmCom has proposed a Webinar on the 31st of January 2021 wherein it will share experiences with Jesuit social activists and lokmanch partners. This is being done with a view to garnering more support for the farmers' movement. Scholarly articles and stories are also circulated for better information and action.

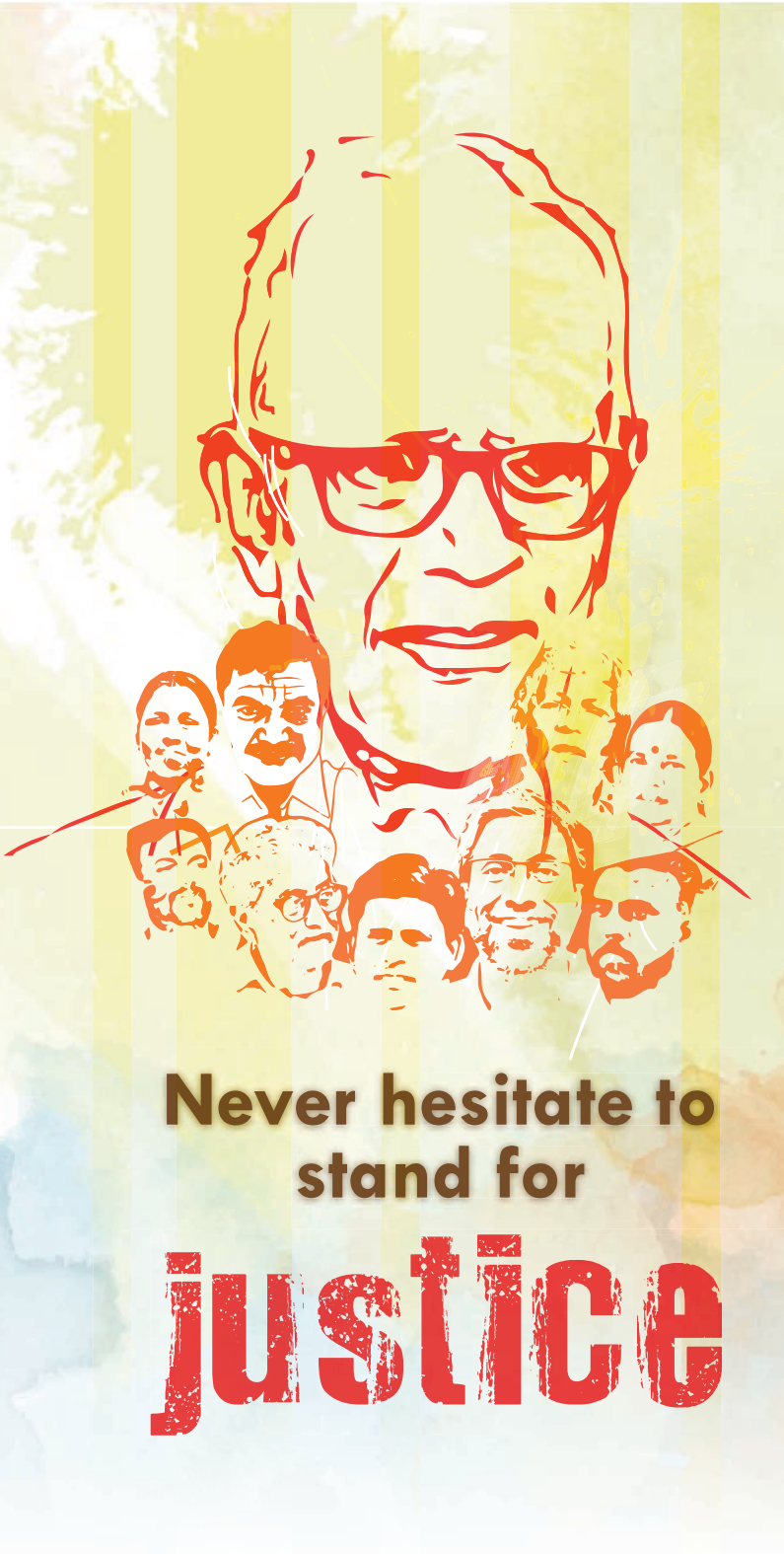
Observing and interacting with those fighting for their right to live a dignified life, we see genuine secularism, socialism, equality and fraternity - all Constitutional Values - being lived out and celebrated in the open streets. There is creativity, humor, tears and laughter, sharing from the heart and fellow-feeling. The gender discrimination is not seen. The women and children feel safe and cared for. The determination to agitate for their rights till the end peacefully is solid and inspirational.

If we fail the farmers, we will fail not only them but also those who are vulnerable and oppressed. We will fail democracy, the Indian constitution, the rule of law, the philosophy of peaceful protest popularized by Gandhi ji. At the end of the day, we will fail our own conscience. We cannot afford this to happen. We need to bear prophetic witness by engaging not only in relief of various kinds but also by doing advocacy on behalf of the farmers and with the farming community in general as the agrarian distress continues to rage and take its toll. The longer term task is to focus on Democracy. We need to strengthen democracy in every area of human endeavor.





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Fr. Stanislaus Lourduswamy an octogenarian Indian Jesuit priest hailing from Jamshedpur province was illegally arrested on the 8th of October 2020. This has stirred up the air mainly in India and some parts of the world. It has been over 120 days of incarceration of Fr. Stan in jail despite the continuous effort taken by Jesuits, collaborators, various CSO's, NGO's, Human Rights groups, several Jesuit institutions and prominent leaders etc, to release Fr. Stan.

At the outset, there have been protests, agitations, online campaigns etc, on various platforms i.e, through writings, marching on the streets, hoisting placards, posters and conducting webinars, online events, campaigns etc. Some of the major steps taken so far to release Fr. Stan Swamy have been very rigorous.

A National Solidarity Day was observed on 12 October 2020 in different parts of the country. To show the efforts of people to release Fr. Stan a dedicated website for the release of Fr. Stan Swamy has been created, where news, updates, events, programs etc., related to Fr. Stan are updated on this website. The url for the website is: <https://standwithstan.jcsaweb.org/>. The updates of Fr. Stan Swamy also reflects in <https://jcsaweb.org/> which has so far 2,09,727 viewers. Next, a signature campaign was launched where over 1.5 lac people have signed with change.org and appealed for the release of Fr.Stan. Moreover, a postcard campaign was conducted where the target was atleast 100,000 people would send postcards to Shri. Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to the voices of people and provide justice to Fr. Stan. Many letters from embassies, consulates, prominent leaders have been sent to Shri. Prime Minister Modi.





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During the time of Christmas, a campaign was conducted namely Christmas with the undertrial campaign where people could send gifts to the prisoners in jail. Furthermore, an appeal campaign was conducted regarding the situation of human right defenders in India, particularly Fr. Stan Swamy SJ, addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to release Fr. Stan and other Human Rights defenders on bail. Have published the news and happenings of Fr. Stan on various national and international news, magazines, web portals, journals etc.

People never stopped praying for the injustices happening in India. To fight against the evil, an online Deepotsav Inter-religious & Catholic prayer was broadcasted which has 629 and 676 viewers respectively. A National vigil for the constitution & Human Rights Defenders program was conducted in which a theme song for Fr. Stan Swamy was launched namely 'Hum Honge Kamyab' which has 4600 plus viewers. Also, a program on democratic right to dissent - Youngistan with Kanhaiya Kumar, a student leader who turned out to be an Indian Politician was conducted which has 900 viewers.



Due to pandemic, it has been difficult to typically gather physically in a traditional way and do protest, rallies and processions. Therefore, online platform had been a great exploration to continue to express, and speak out against the wrongs in the society. Dedicated pages on FB, Twitter and other social media platforms have been created to give the ground the right information about the issue which is constantly trending. Also, a Stan Storm was organized on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and



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WhatsApp along with JCSEA on different occasions. Some of the hashtags that have been widely prominent in the whole scenario are: #StandWithStan, #SipperForStan, #FreeStan and #FreeStanSwamy

Many provinces are doing a lot of activities in the context of releasing Fr. Stan. All of them have been consolidated and placed in a dedicated google drive for each province. The drives have been created as communication campaign, advocacy campaign and general information regarding Fr. Stan which gets updated as and when any activity is done by any province.

On the occasion of the Republic day on 26th January 2021, an online event was conducted, We the people-reclaiming the republic for which there are 1300 plus viewers. This event was conducted to observe the constitution of India and to understand how it has been exploited by the injustices of the country. Based on the number of days of incarceration of Fr. Stan regular posters are being created.

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) meeting was conducted where more than 110 civil organisation and over 12000 viewers had participated. Adding to that, Day of Fast was observed on the 30th January 2021 - Martyr's Day: Recalling Gandhi's Vision of Freedom and Liberty as creating an Inclusive, Plural, Tolerant India with a Sense of Humour! This event commemorated the values of Gandhi who stood for by demanding that the state should,

- Repeal the UAPA
- Release all those falsely arrested under UAPA
- Stop using UAPA as a tool of harassment
- Respect the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression
- Develop a sense of humour

The sole purpose of keeping the momentum of Stan ministry is to take up real issues of the country, like Farmer's Bills, Anti-Conversion laws, among others and to generate solidarity as responsible Jesuits. The success lies on the impact made by the actions to bring justice and achievement in true sense would be the continuation of Online Ministry and educating people as responsible Jesuits.





Fr Stany D'Souza, the POSA through his circular dated 22 November 2020 appointed an organizing committee for the Ignatian Year at the Conference level with the following members: Fr Francis Pudhicherry (Coordinator), Fr Roland Coelho, Fr Ajit Xess, Fr Siji Chacko, Fr Sunny Kunnel. They held online meetings with Province Coordinators of Ignatian Year to plan Conference level celebration of the Ignatian Year.

## Collated reports sent from Provinces.

### Programs for Ignatian year in the Conference of South Asia

All provinces of the Conference have formed a committee for celebrating the Ignatian year. We have summarized the reports sent by the Province coordinators of the Ignatian year. The following action plans are only the first level of proposals. They have to be concretized in the subsequent meetings planned.



## Programs for the Jesuits

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### Province level Programs

- ▶ Province retreats based on the autobiography of St Ignatius particularly on Manresa experience
- ▶ Sharing of conversion experience of Jesuits in groups.
- ▶ Circulation of videos on the life of St Ignatius
- ▶ Recollections in different zones of the Province on the life of Ignatius
- ▶ Training teams for Conversion retreats, workshops and seminars
- ▶ Making available prepared video talks
- ▶ Making available online inputs by Ignatian experts
- ▶ Preparation of a booklet for novena for the feast St Ignatius
- ▶ Webinars on Ignatian themes by national/international experts on spirituality.
- ▶ Making available articles/books (PDF) on significant Ignatian themes to the Jesuits on a monthly basis.

### Jesuit Communities

- ▶ Common pilgrimage
- ▶ Personal Workshops and retreats for the individual Jesuits
- ▶ Community building programmes
- ▶ Faith sharing in communities
- ▶ Annual Retreat based on the Autobiography of Ignatius
- ▶ Community recollections and adorations on Ignatian themes

### Jesuit Scholastics

- ▶ Making short videos and clips on Ignatian themes
- ▶ A magazine on Ignatian theme animated by PCF
- ▶ An Ignatian Week during the Summer vacation
- ▶ Talks, seminars, and recollection on Ignatian themes

## For Ignatian family

- ▶ Gatherings of former Jesuits
- ▶ Seminars on Ignatian themes
- ▶ A colloquium/seminar for a day with Religious congregations who follow Ignatian Spirituality
- ▶ Ignatian Table Calendar on Ignatian Leadership Quotes and Saints of the Day.
- ▶ Fr Lisbert D'Souza is ready to conduct two zoom sessions on Ignatian Leadership early Lent.

## Laity

- ▶ Retreats/seminars/workshops/quiz competitions on Ignatian themes
- ▶ Televised programs on the life of St Ignatius
- ▶ Sending lay people for Ignatian courses
- ▶ Pilgrimage to Vasai, where Francis Xavier worked and a Eucharist at the Jesuit Chapel in Vasai Fort
- ▶ Making a flex to be made focusing Ignatius' life and conversion experience and displayed in each parish
- ▶ Homilies on Ignatian theme - once a month
- ▶ Retreats and weekend recollections for college students, youth, parishioners in parishes
- ▶ Concentrating on spiritual activities for the Iñigo groups
- ▶ Ignatian videos that could be circulated in the mission centres and institutions
- ▶ Hold bhajan/dance performances on Ignatian themes composed by experts
- ▶ Good Night Daily Messages beginning from Ash Wednesday
- ▶ Preaching of Lenten Missions on the topic of SIN based on the Spiritual Exercises.

## Educational institutions

- ▶ Display of information on Ignatian/Jesuit matters. Have a dedicated Notice Board in schools and colleges where snippets from the life of Ignatius as well as information about the Society can be periodically put up.
- ▶ Bookmarks/hand-outs containing information on Ignatian themes like Ignatian Examen/Discernment.
- ▶ A meaningful "Ignatian Week" in the month of July, 2021 could be celebrated in our Social, Educational institutions as well as in Jesuit parishes.
- ▶ Ignatian Leadership for our school staff
- ▶ Quiz program in respective schools first, later inter-school quiz competition Making a flex focusing Ignatius' conversion experience and displayed in each school
- ▶ Exhibition room in each educational institute on Ignatian themes
- ▶ Seminars and symposia on Ignatian themes for college students and Parish youth
- ▶ Small skits and plays (original compositions) by school and college students

## Youth

- ▶ Magis experience
- ▶ Inigo-fest talent shows and cultural programs and sports
- ▶ Trekking for the youth based on Ignatian pilgrimage

## Publication

- ▶ Publishing a magazine on Ignatian themes. Special invitation to be sent to ex-Jesuits to write articles on how Ignatius and the Spiritual Exercises have influenced them.



## Farewell to Fr Keith Williams Abranches



A short function was organized, immediately after the celebration of the Eucharist on 28 December 2020 at the Jesuit residence, Jor Bagh, New Delhi, in gratitude for the services of Fr Keith as the Socius of the Conference and a welcoming Fr Shajumon to the office of Socius.

Fr Keith was appointed as Socius to POSA in 2015. He worked under two Presidents of the Conference for six years. He also served as the Conference Delegate for Formation for the last six months. His spiritual outlook, amiability and sporting spirit are hard to forget. His life of discipline passion for details enhanced the efficiency of his work. His commitment and dedication to his work are inspiring. Fr Stany, the President of Jesuit Conference of South Asia said his message that Fr Keith had been a great support to the Conference and the service he rendered could not be described in words. The office of the Socius requires someone with a combination of talents, efficiency, reliability, confidentiality and loyalty to the Society. The Socius is the memory and hands of the Provincial.

Fr General appointed Fr Keith as the Rector of Gesu, Rome. He now goes to serve the universal Society. The Jesuit Conference of South Asia will miss him. We wish him all the very best for his future ministry.

Jor Bagh community also welcomed Fr Shajumon Chakkalakkal as the Socius to POSA and Fr Arjen Tete as the new Secretary for formation. Fr Shajumon was the Socius to the Provincial of Darjeeling before he came to Delhi. Fr Arjen has been teaching theology at Jnana Deepa, Pune for many years.

# Book Release



Fr KT Chandy handed over the first copy of his latest book '*Invisible Injustices*' to Fr Stany on 29 December 2020 at Jor Bagh, New Delhi. The book is a collection of essays he published over the years. Congratulations, Fr Chandy!

## Shield of Honour

International STEAM Research (ISR) and TED CIRCLES honoured Fr Sunny Jacob, SJ in KOLKATA, on 31 January 2021, for outstanding contribution over the years in the field of education and invaluable contribution to TED Circles. Congratulations Fr Sunny!

*Congratulations!*

**Fr Sunny Jacob, SJ**



## Formation of committees

Fr Stany, the President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, constituted two important committees in the month of November 2020.

1. A Committee to study the Finances and Investments of Common Houses with the following members: Fr Claudius Tauro (JCI Treasurer), Fr Conrad Pessa (Treasurer, St Xavier's, Mumbai), Fr Xavier Ignatius (the Treasurer of Delhi Province), Fr Paul Fernandes ( Jamshedpur Province), Mr Dominic Savior (CA, Prof. Loyola College, Chennai)
2. A Committee to study the development of Conference Common Houses properties with the following members: Fr Claudius Tauro (JCI Treasurer), Fr Dionysius Vaz (Provincial of Karnataka), Fr Joseph Xavier (Exe. Director of ISI-B), Fr Thomas Amirtham (the Principal of Loyola College, Chennai)



## POSA's Schedule

### FEBRUARY

- 1-4 Bengaluru
- 5-7 Budget Meeting, Pune
- 10 Meeting of the JRS team 6-8 pm (Online)
- 11 Meeting of tertian masters 6-8 pm (Online)
- 12 Conference editors & others 6-8 pm (Online)
- 13 Meeting: forums & networks 6-8 pm (Online)
- 15 C Sec - Meeting 6-8 pm (Online)
- 16 Superiors' meeting 6-8 pm (Online)
- 17 DoW meeting 6-8 pm (Online)
- 22-26 JCSA (Online)

### MARCH

- 1 Consult at Jor Bagh
- 3 Patna Province Jubilee
- 4-6 Patna
- 13 ISI B GB meeting
- 16 SN Senate meeting
- 17 AICUF House Visitation
- 19 ISI D GB Meeting

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